Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 13690 111717Z

64
ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

EA-06 SP-02 PRS-01 DRC-01 RSC-01 /042 W
---------- 095327
R 111625Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4482
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
USLO PEKING
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13690

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, NP
SUBJ: DETERIORATION OF INDIA-NEPAL RELATIONS

REF: KATHMANDU 4166, STATE 224394

SUMMARY: INDIA IS KEEPING ITS AMBASSADOR TO NEPAL IN DELHI FOR WHAT WILL PROBABLY AMOUNT TO AT LEAST A MONTH IN ORDER TO SHOW ITS DISPLEASURE OVER THE NEPALESE REACTION TO EVENTS IN SIKKIM. THE GOI ASSURES US THAT IT WILL NOT OTHERWISE, RETALIATE AGAINST NEPAL, AND THE NEPALESE EMBASSY TELLS US THAT IT HAS NO INDICATIONS OF ANY RETALIATION. WE ESTIMATE THAT NOW THAT THE GOI HAS MADE ITS POINT, RELATIONS WILL GRADUALLY IMPROVE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO NEPAL, M. RASGOTRA, ARRIVED IN DELHI SEPTEMBER 23 AMID PRESS REPORTS THAT HE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN A THOROUGH REVIEW OF INDO-NEPALESE RELATIONS. RASGOTRA TOLD THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 13690 111717Z

DCM OCTOBER 10 THAT HE WOULD NOT RETURN TO NEPAL FOR ANOTHER TEN

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

DAYS TO TWO WEEKS. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS BEING RETAINED HERE AS A WARNING TO THE NEPALESE. HE SAID IT WAS APPARENT THAT THE NEPALESE GOVERNMENT HAD INSPIRED THE RIOTS TO PROTEST THE GOI ACTION TO ASSOCIATE SIKKIM MORE CLOSELY WITH INDIA. THE GON COULD NOT EXPECT TO "GO TO THE STREETS" ON AN ISSUE SUCH AS THIS, HE EXPLAINED. THE NEPALESE SEEMED TO THINK THAT THEY COULD KICK INDIA AROUND AS THEY LIKED, AND THAT IN SOME WAY INDIA NEEDED NEPAL. BUT, RASGOTRA CAREFULLY ADDED, INDIA PLANNED NO SANCTIONS AGAINST NEPAL. THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN THE RESTRICT-IONS THE GOI HAS IMPOSED ON THE NEPALI CONGRESS LEADERS IN EXILE IN INDIA -- RASGOTRA CLAIMS THAT THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT IF THEY COME WITIN 50 MILES OF THE BORDER, THEY WILL BE SHOT. FURTHERMORE, ACCORDING TO RASGOTRA, THE TRANSIT TRADE TO NEPAL IS MUCH TOO IMPORTANT TO TAMPER WITH.

2. INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WORKING LEVEL OFFICIALS ARE VERY GUARDED ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON AND PROBABLY KNOW FAR LESS THAN RASGOTRA. THEY INSIST, HOWEVER, THAT DAY-TO-DAY DEALINGS WITH NEPAL ARE ON A "BUSINESS AS USUAL" BASIS. THE NEPALESE DCM HERE CONFIRMS THIS. HE SAYS THAT HE HAS NEITHER SEEN NOR HEARD OF ANY CHANGE IN THE INDIAN MANNER OF DEALING WITH DAY-TO-DAY ISSUES WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED RETALIATION. HE SPECIFICALLY DENIED REPORTS OF HARASSMENT OF NEPALESE LIVING IN INDIA, AND CONGEN CALCUTTA HAS HEARD NO STORIES OF HARASSMENT FROM ITS EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH THE NEPALESE COMMUNITY THERE. THE NEPALESE DCM ALSO DENIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY INDIAN ACTION TO SLOW DOWN THE TRANSIT TRADE OR THE SUPPLY OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES TO NEPAL FROM INDIA, ALTHOUGH ALCUTTA REPORTS THAT THE NEPALESE CONSULATE THERE NOTED A "LESS COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE THAN USUAL" AMONG THE INDIAN PORT AND RAILWAY OFFICIALS IN THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ANTI-INDIAN DEMONSTRATIONS.

3. THE NEPALESE AMBASSADOR HAS SEEN FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH THREE TIMES. THE AMBASSADOR HAS ALSO CALLED ON SEVERAL MINISTERS. ACCORDING TO THE NEPALESE DCM, THE INDIANS HAVEN'T COME RIGHT OUT AND SAID AS MUCH, BUT THE MESSAGE SEEMS TO BE THAT THEY WOULD LIKE NEPAL TO MAKE AMENDS, THAT EVEN SO THINGS WON'T GET WORSE, BUT THAT IT HAD BETTER NOT HAPPEN AGAIN. THE CLIMATE IN THESE CALLS HAS GRADUALLY IMPROVED. HE ALSO NOTED THAT SHARPLY ANTI-NEPALESE STORIES IN THE INDIAN PRESS, WHICH HAD BEEN COMING CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 13690 111717Z

FROM THE INDIAN CORRESPONDENTS IN KATHMANDU, HAD LARGELY CEASED. HE SAID THAT NEPALESE POLICY WOULD BE TO KEEP ITS HEAD DOWN AND WAIT OUT THE FREEZE.

4. COMMENT: WE TOO HAD ORIGINALLY THOUGHT RASGOTRA MIGHT HAVE EXCEEDED HIS INSTRUCTIONS. IF SO, HOWEVER, HE WOULDN'T HAVE STAYED SO LONG. IT NOW SEEMS MORE LIKELY THAT THE GOI HAS DECIDED TO MAKE HIS TEMPORARY RECALL THE SOLE ELEMENT OF A

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

"WARNING" TO THE GON. WE SEE NO LIKELIHOOD OF A BREAKDOWN IN THE
"PAX HIMALAYA" AS LONG AS THE GOI DOES NOTHING TO "UNLEASH" THE
NEPALI CONGRESS OR TO AFFECT THE FLOW OF SUPPLIES FROM INDIA
AND OTHER COUNTRIES INTO NEPAL. DESPITE THE REPORT OF SOME
SLOWDOWN IN CALCUTTA, BOTH THE NEPALESE HERE AND THE INDIANS DENY
THAT GOI POLICY IS TO REDUCE THE FLOW OF SUPPLIES. THEY ALSO DENY
ANY CHANGE OF POLICY TOWARD THE NEPALI CONGRESS.
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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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